

REMARKS:

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation that the Examiner indicates that claims 3-10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent format, including the limitations of their base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 1-10 are pending and are subject to examination in the above-captioned patent application. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider the above-captioned patent application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

In the Office Action mailed August 1, 2005, the Examiner rejected claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,108,259 to Choi et al. ("Choi"). Applicant respectfully traverse this rejection, as follows.

Applicants' independent claim 1 describes a nonvolatile semiconductor memory device, comprising: "a plurality of blocks each having a memory cell array; . . . a plurality of reference load circuits, each of which is provided in each of said plurality of blocks, and imposes a load on the reference signal that is identical to a load imposed on data that is read from said memory cell array; and a plurality of sensing circuits, each of which is provided in each of said plurality of blocks, and compares the data with the reference signal having the load imposed thereon by said reference load circuit so as to sense the data." Thus, in Applicant's claimed invention, the reference load circuits are each provided in a separate block for the purpose of imposing a load on the reference signal that is identical to a load imposed on data that is read from the memory cell array. Moreover, a sensing circuit in each block compares the data with the reference signal having the load imposed thereon so as to sense the data. In this manner, the claimed

reference load circuits are each provided in a separate block, and serve to impose a load on the reference signal that is to be compared with data.

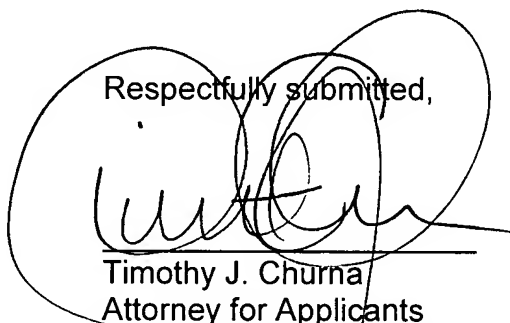
In contrast to Applicants' claimed invention as set forth in independent claim 1, Choi merely describes a single, common reference cell block 520 that provides a single reference value to a plurality of sense amplifiers. The Examiner equates reference cell block 520 with Applicants' claimed reference load circuits. However, in Applicants' claimed invention as set forth in independent claim 1, a reference load circuit is provided in **each of the plurality of blocks**, whereas in Choi, only one reference cell block is provided, and this reference cell block is **shared by the plurality of blocks**. See, e.g., Choi, Figure 4. Because Choi provides a single, common reference block 520 to supply a single reference value to a plurality of sense amplifiers, reference cell block 520 clearly is different that the reference load circuits set forth in Applicants' independent claim 1.

Moreover, Applicants note that the reference driving circuit 250 of Choi provides a reference current that has the same reference value as the single reference value provided by the reference block 500. Thus, the reference driving circuit 250 also is different than Applicants' claimed reference load circuits that impose a load on the reference signal that is identical to a load imposed on the data. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of independent claim 1 at least for these reasons.

Claim 2 depends from allowable, independent claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner also withdraw the rejection of claim 2 at least for this reason.

CONCLUSION:

Applicants respectfully submit that the above-captioned patent application is in condition for allowance, and such action is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that an in-person or telephonic interview with Applicants' representatives would expedite the prosecution of the above-captioned patent application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney of records. Applicants believe that no fees are due as a result of this response. Nevertheless, in the event of any variance between the fees determined by Applicants and those determined by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, please charge or credit any such variance to the undersigned's Deposit Account No. 01-2300, referencing Attorney Docket No. 100353-00173.

Respectfully submitted,


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